

Genesis 20-21 – Isaac: The Son of Promise

God is Faithful

Section 1: Gen. 20 - Repeated Sin – Repeated Grace

¹From there Abraham traveled to the region of the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was staying in Gerar, ²Abraham said about his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.

¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves so that they could bear children, ¹⁸for the Lord had completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech's household on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Abraham once again (Gen 12) falls victim to fear which causes him to become disobedient. With Abraham repeating a previous sin why don't we see God raining down judgement and condemnation? Why in return do we see God giving grace and mercy?

As we have mentioned several times, we continuously see pictures of Christ throughout Abraham's life. Once again, we see a picture of the gospel in this story. As it says in Romans 5:20-6:2...through Christ where sin is multiplied, grace is multiplied even more.

Romans 5:20 – 6:2 (CSB)

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Do you ever feel discouraged about repeated sins?
- ❖ How does it impact your faith to know that even when sin multiplies, grace multiplies more?
- ❖ What are some practical steps one could take to break the cycle of repeated sins?

Section 2: Gen. 21:1-5 – As He said...As He promised!

The Lord came to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. ²Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. ³Abraham named his son who was born to him—the one Sarah bore to him—Isaac. ⁴When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

The Lord came as He said and did as He promised. 2 Peter 3:9.

If God says it...it is truth. If God promises something...it will come to pass. Why is that a significant truth to embrace in Genesis 21? Because if it's true for Abraham, then it's true for us today.

For example, the gospel is true and judgement is coming. All of human history will climax at the great white throne judgment described in Revelation 20. This moment in human history is why we NEED the gospel. Our need for the gospel will be further discussed in the next section.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Do you ever grow impatient? Why is patience better?
- ❖ Why do we need to remember that all of God's Word is truth?
- ❖ Why do we need to remember that all that He promises will come to pass?

Section 3: Gen. 21:6-13 – Son of Promise

¹¹ This was very distressing to Abraham because of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed about the boy and about your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac, ¹³ and I will also make a nation of the slave’s son because he is your offspring.”

Yet again we are seeing there is a vast difference between the son of promise and the son of sin. Isaac and Ishmael were not equals. Their difference is highlighted over and over again throughout the Scriptures.

The contrast between Isaac and Ishmael is a brutal reminder that not everyone will be going to heaven. The lake of fire will be filled with many. Many church members, many “good” people, many successful people. Also, the Bible teaches that there will actually be more thrown into the lake of fire than will be ushered into the new heavens and new earth. Matthew 7:13-14 (CSB) says, - *¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. ¹⁴ How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.*

Many will walk the road of destruction and few will walk the road of life. Jesus continues in Matthew 7:21-23. Many will experience the wrath of God for all eternity. The story of Isaac and Ishmael should compel us to share the gospel with everyone. Just because someone seems “good” or their life seems to be “put together” doesn’t mean anything. We can’t assume salvation upon anyone. We must share the gospel with everyone.

The story of Isaac and Ishmael should open your eyes to the reality of what awaits us in eternity.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ How should the contrast between Isaac and Ishmael impact us?
- ❖ Why should we have an urgency to share the gospel?
- ❖ Does your life show you are concerned about eternity? Why or why not?

Section 4: Gen. 21:14-21 – Jesus Matters More

¹⁸ Get up, help the boy up, and grasp his hand, for I will make him a great nation.”

Hagar and Ishmael are delivered by God. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks of loving your enemies and how God causes it to rain on the just and unjust. I believe this story about Hagar and Ishmael is a perfect example of Matthew 5:43-48.

When it comes to general worldly “blessings” the righteous and unrighteous will have the same experiences. The saved and lost will be rich, will be poor, will have great jobs, will have terrible jobs. It’s not what you have or don’t have...it’s about Jesus. Ishmael will become a great nation, but he will do so without God. Therefore, he will forfeit his soul. Mark 8:36-37 (CSB) says, *³⁶ For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life? ³⁷ What can anyone give in exchange for his life?*

The gospel makes all the difference. The gospel matters more than kingdoms and possessions.

Discussion Question:

- ❖ What matters more to you...stuff or God?

Section 5: Gen. 21:22-33 – Abraham Worships

³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.